

# The CEF at Bois-Grenier, March 1915: The Forgotten Battle

By Richard Laughton, May 2015



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Two separate research projects resulted in my coincidental examination of the Canadian Expeditionary Force at Bois-Grenier in March 1915, recorded historically as part of the British Battle at Neuve Chapelle. Most Canadian's are probably aware of the reported Canadian "*Baptism of Fire*" occurring during the gas attacks in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres, Belgium in April 1915. Many may not be aware of the prior entry of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division into the British trenches at Bois-Grenier the prior month, thus suggesting that was the CEF's "*Baptism of Fire*". During March of 1915 there were 92 Canadian deaths in France as compared to 42 in Belgium. Very little is reported in the historical accounts of the Canadian action at the "*Forgotten Battle*" at Bois-Grenier, France.

In the early months of 1915 the British Army came to the realization that they were not able to penetrate the strongly held German lines of the European Western Front. Alternative tactics were being considered, such as new fronts in the Baltic. Under Russian influence, the British opted to launch the new offensive in the Dardanelles under the direction of Winston Churchill, Lord of the British Admiralty (*March 18, 1915*). A significant portion of the British forces would be pitted against the German lines in Flanders (Belgium). In concert with the French Army, communications would be targeted on the Western Front in France at Artois and Champagne (French) and La Basse and Lille (British).

The politics and military planning behind the first great artillery assault at Neuve Chapelle were described by Cana<sup>1</sup> in the Source Records of the Great War:

*The time had come for a vigorous offensive movement by the British troops. The reasons which Sir John French gave for this offensive deserve careful consideration. The independence of the operations of the Russians, French, and British should be particularly noted. It should also be noted that Sir John was contemplating, not a general advance, but a movement with a definite local objective.*

*The object of the battle was the capture of Neuve Chapelle and the establishment of the British Line as far forward as possible to the east of that place. Neuve Chapelle, after heavy fighting in November 1914 had passed into the hands of the Germans. It was Sir John French's hope that the taking of Neuve Chapelle would be followed up by the capture of the Auber's ridge. This would have jeopardized the German position at La Bassée and made the enemy fear for the safety of Lille, which is some ten miles east of Aubers.*

The [\*CEFSG Chronology of the War\*](#)<sup>2</sup> reports that on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Lieutenant-General Alderson, Officer Commanding (O.C.) 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division assumed responsibility for 6,400 yards of the front lines at Fleurbaix, in the area between Armentieres and Neuve Chapelle, France. The 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division came under the command of the British 1<sup>st</sup> Army on March 8<sup>th</sup>, shortly before commencement of the Battle of Neuve Chapelle on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Here, the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Divisional Artillery was instrumental in the shelling of

enemy positions. The area of *Bois-Grenier*, northeast of Neuve Chapelle to the southwest of Armentières, was held by the British 1<sup>st</sup> Army. As reported, the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division of the Canadian Expeditionary Force served in the British 1<sup>st</sup> Army during that period.

The role of the Canadian 1<sup>st</sup> Division in March 1915 is more or less relegated to quick summaries in the modern literature. As early as January 1916 Sir Max Aitken <sup>3</sup> (*later Lord Beaverbrook*) dedicated Chapter III of his personal account of the Great War ("*The Official History of the Canadian Expeditionary Force*") to the British action at Neuve Chapelle and thus included the Canadians who were then under the control of the British Army. In his main text he writes:

*The object of this battle of Neuve Chapelle was to give our men a new spirit of offensive and to test the British fighting machine which had been built up with so much difficulty on the Western Front. Besides, if this attack succeeded in destroying the German lines, it would be possible to gain the Aubers ridge which dominates Lille.*

Despite the early success with the bombardment by the British, Indian and Canadian artillery, it was not expected to be an easy task to take Neuve Chapelle and advance on Aubers. The role of the Canadian 1<sup>st</sup> Division keeping the Germans busy on the Bois-Grenier front, although critical to the success of the operation, was relegated to the back burner. As Cana <sup>1</sup> states in his essay:

*It will be seen that the task assigned to the British troops would be difficult. No attempt could be made to take the German positions without adequate artillery preparation, and at Neuve Chapelle, for the first time in the war, so far as the British were concerned, a force of artillery had been concentrated sufficient for its purposes.*

*At the same time troops of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army were told to keep the enemy in front of them occupied, thus preventing reinforcements being sent by the Germans for those portions of his line to the main point of attack. These supplementary operations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army had the desired effect and resulted in the capture of the village of L'Épinette (near Armentières) and adjacent farms, but do not call for any further mention.*

It is only after the battle and in the notes to the text that Aitken <sup>3</sup> provides the details as to what had been planned, where he describes the details from the Canadian perspective:

*The scheme of the attack on Neuve Chapelle had been worked out by General John Gough before he was killed, and it was explained to this Corps Commanders by Sir John French on May 8<sup>th</sup> as follows: - The 1<sup>st</sup> Army was to launch the main assault, the 4<sup>th</sup> Corps being on the left flank and the Indian Corps on the right. To hold up the enemy all along the line, and to prevent his massing reinforcements to meet the main attack, two other supplemental attacks were also to be made – one attack by the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps from Givenchy, and the other by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps – detailed from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army for that purpose – to the south of Armentières.*

This was not the first time the British had tried to take Neuve Chapelle. Their first attempt on October 28, 1914 resulted in dismal failure. Noted French military authority, Count De Souza's <sup>4</sup> account of the 1914 and 1915 actions refer to this prior attempt:

*This position formed a salient in the British line, and in order to preserve the integrity of that line (in other words to make it stronger), it was necessary to take the village of Neuve Chapelle - which had been once before attacked unsuccessfully (October 28th).*

*The former attempt had failed because it had been made with inadequate means. This time the operation was carried out by two army corps, the 4th Corps and the Indian Corps, which were swiftly and secretly concentrated on the line Rue d'Enfer-Richebourg St. Vast, their forward movement being covered and supported by the fire of 350 guns, British and French.*

There is little written on the October 28, 1914 attack on Neuve Chapelle and it is not recorded in the Chronology of the War <sup>2</sup> described earlier. What we do know from the fleeting references is that the Germans attacked the village on October 25, 1914. The British, with support from Indian and French troops held back the attack, but faltered again on the 26<sup>th</sup> and the Germans took the village on 27 October 1914. The British counterattack the same day failed and the Germans held Neuve Chapelle until March 10, 1915.

The action at Neuve Chapelle in both October 1914 and March 1915 had a significant direct input from the Indian Army and considerable support from the French Army, so as to free up British resources to be used at Neuve Chapelle. There is no intent in this article to suggest that the input of the Indian and French forces was irrelevant, by not detailing those contributions, rather this article's purpose is to bring awareness of the Canadian role in the early trench warfare of March 1916, prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres.

In 1938 Duguid <sup>5</sup> provided considerable details of the battle at Neuve Chapelle in Chapter V of his text (*"Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919 – Vol. 1"*), as he described as to how the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division entered the line, starting at Fleurbaix on February 11, 1915. Duguid's work was to be the first of many volumes on the history of the Great War, but with the commencement of the Second World War in 1939 the plans for future volumes were curtailed. Duguid describes the details of the planned attacks to retake Neuve Chapelle, moving east to capture the Aubers ridge south of Fromelles. The Canadian 1<sup>st</sup> Division would cover the left flank of the British IV Corps towards Fromelles, thus preventing the Germans sending reinforcements south from Fromelles to Aubers. If and when necessary, the Canadian 1<sup>st</sup> Division could be called upon to move forward on the enemy to further hinder the enemy's advance. In the end, it appears the Canadians role remained to hold the line, without offensive actions past the front trench lines \*. For the military historian, Duguid's text is important, as Volume 2 provides detailed maps and appendices, containing the text of the orders of the day, thus the details of the planned attack.

*(\* Author's Note: We know this not to be entirely true, as the war diaries report on a number of excursions by the Canadian infantry out into No-Man's Land to scout the German positions. See 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diary report of deaths on March 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> – details of which follow).*

It was not until 1962 that Nicholson <sup>6</sup> penned the next account of the Canadians, for as Chief of the Army Historical Section at National Defence, it was his role to finish the work started by Duguid and condense all the proposed volumes into one document (*"Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War: Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919"*). In theory, it was the history of the Canadian Corps which formed

part of the British Army in the Great War. By the time of Nicholson's work, the significance of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division in the British Battle of Neuve Chapelle was almost overlooked, as it is tucked away in Chapter 3 under "The Battle of Ypres, 1915". Interestingly, many of the British accounts of the October 1914 battle at Neuve Chapelle were included in references to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battle of Ypres that same month, thus Nicholson was not the first. Here he describes how "*the 1<sup>st</sup> Division Enters the Line*":

*(Author's Note: despite the mere 20 mile separation, we are in France not Belgium)*

*Between 17 February and 2 March each infantry brigade, accompanied by a field artillery brigade and engineer, signal and service corps personnel, was attached for a week to one of two British Divisions holding the line in front of Armentières.*

*Before the tour ended, orders came for the 1<sup>st</sup> Division to take over a section of the First Army's front. The relief of the 7<sup>th</sup> British Division began on the last day of February, and at 11:00 a.m. on 3 March General Alderson assumed responsibility for 6400 yards of line in front of Fleurbaix. Here the Canadians formed the left wing of Lieut-General Sir H. S. Rawlinson's 4<sup>th</sup> Corps.*

*On the British left the Canadian Division (which on March 8 had come directly under command of the First Army) was to make a demonstration fire along its entire front in order to prevent German reinforcement of the battle area from that sector. If a British break-through developed, the Canadians would be ready to advance on orders from the First Army.*

*When the bombardment began at 7:30 a.m. on 10 March, the Canadian divisional artillery shelled enemy positions opposite, and as the assault went in thirty-five minutes later, riflemen and machine-gunners opened bursts of rapid fire which continued at fifteen minute intervals throughout the day. The main attack took the enemy completely by surprise, and within 20 minutes a breach 1600 yards wide had been opened in the German line.*

The battle at Neuve Chapelle, as described by Nicholson, more or less ended during the late evening hours of March 12, 1915, as British losses were increasing and the advance was stalling. The British troops were fatigued and the ammunition was in short supply. Haig had no choice; he ordered the establishment of a new British defensive line and ended the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. Thereafter, the Canadians remained in their trenches until they left the area of Fleurbaix on the 27<sup>th</sup> of the month. Nicholson reports 12,892 casualties in the British First Army, of which 100 were of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division. It is unfortunate but it is described as:

*... which was no more than the normal wastage for that period in the line.*

In his detailed 2000 report on the stalemate in the 1915 battles of the Western Front, author and military historian John Keegan<sup>7</sup> provided considerable detail on the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, noting the attack was to be on March 10<sup>th</sup> by the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> British Divisions in conjunction with the Meerut and Lahore Divisions of the Indian Corps. He does not list the Canadian Corps as a separate participant, perhaps as with only the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division formed it was not yet a Corps. Without direct reference to the Canadians he does mention that the artillery barrage would fire behind German lines

(not in front to cut wire or on the line to decimate the troops), so as to prevent German reserves moving to the front lines. As the British and Indian troops advanced, Keegan reports that they “*would be supported by reserves moving forward to take further objectives, but only on receipt of orders from General Sir Douglas Haig*”. We now know these “reserve troops” were none other than the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division.

In 2007, author and historian Tim Cook <sup>8</sup> provided an overview of the Canadian action in March of 1915 as he describes as “*Welcome to the Western Front*”:

*The Canadians were involved in their first battle of March 10, 1915, in support of a large British and Indian offensive at Neuve Chapelle, with the well-defended Aubers Ridge 5 kilometers behind it as a secondary objective. It is not surprising that, as untried troops, the Canadians were put on the flank, where they would get a taste of battle but nothing too costly – unless the British forces in the centre made a breakthrough, in which case the Canadians would be thrown into the gap as an exploitation force.*

*The Canadians were not to leave their trenches, but to simply keep up a heavy rate of fire in order to stop the enemy from shifting its reserves over to the real battle front.*

*In support of the operation, the Canadians lost a hundred men, which seemed like a lot for a mere diversion, but few complained.*

As late as 2014, Professor Granatstein <sup>9</sup> gives light mention to the Canadians at Bois-Grenier, as he describes “*Canada and the War*” as a prelude to Canada’s 100 Days:

*For two weeks at the end of February, the Canadian Division had its first taste of action when each of its brigades did a seven-day familiarization tour with British units, Officers and men paired off with a peer, manned a small stretch of trench for 24 hours, and the artillery worked with gunners from the Royal Artillery.*

*On March 3, the Canadians took over 6,400 yards of the front near Armentières, supported a British attack, and suffered their first casualties. By the end of the month, the division had marched north to Ypres, Belgium.*

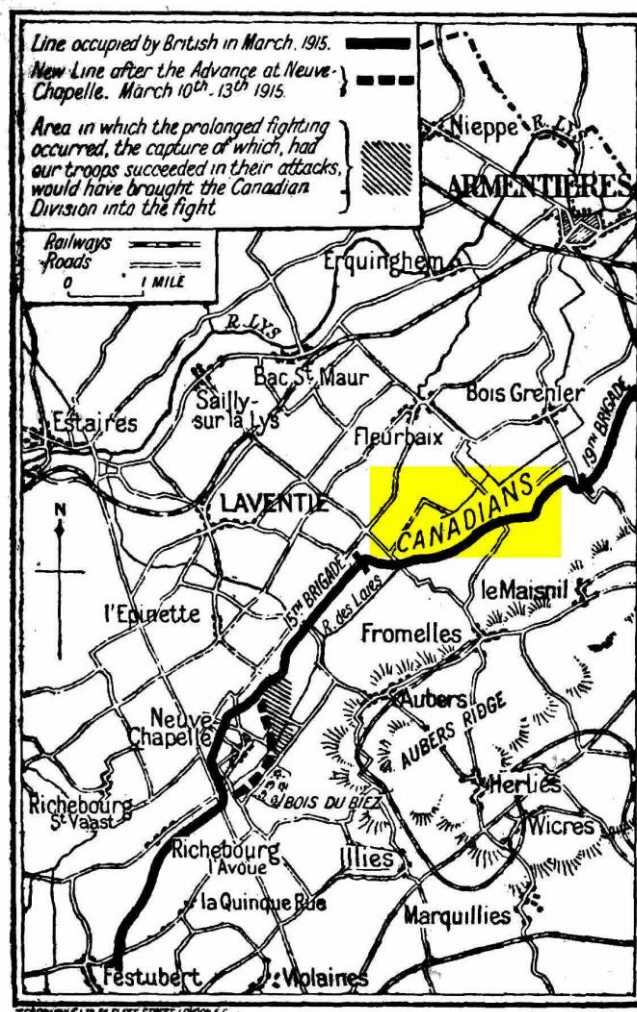
In order to learn more about the Canadians at Fleurbaix and Bois-Grenier in the British Battle of Neuve Chapelle, it is necessary to go back to the primary sources – the war diaries of the Canadian units in the field in March of 1915. Even here, the accounts of the battle vary by unit author and each is influenced by the personal views of those who recorded the daily events. Notwithstanding those restrictions, the war diaries do reveal that this “*was real*” and although a diversion from the main battle, the Germans were lodging artillery shells on the units of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division (*artillery, infantry, engineers, signallers, and service corps troops*) and shooting “*real bullets*”. Just because the British did not break through to Aubers and the Canadians were not thrown into the exploitation phase of the battle, is no reason to underestimate the important role of the Canadians and the terror that must have gone through the men during that period.

For the first time since the South African War (1899-1902), Canadians were dying on a foreign battlefield. By my count, there were 92 Canadians killed in the actions in France in March of 1915. By comparison to modern times, there were 158 deaths in the Canadian Forces in the Afghan War from 2002-2011. The Canadians lost at Bois-Grenier deserve much more recognition than they have received to date. This analysis will look at not only the battle but some of the men lost on the line in March of 1915. The names of all lost are contained in Appendix 1.

There is no better “summary” schematic of the battle area than that provided by Aitken <sup>3</sup> as it captures all the salient features of the area which are impossible to illustrate easily with a 1915 trench map.

The section of the trench line held by the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division has been highlighted for this presentation. To the northeast you will see Bois-Grenier and to the south Fromelles and Aubers. The main objective of the British attack at Neuve Chapelle is to the southwest, northwest of Bois du Biez.

You will note in the title block that Aitken notes the movement of the British line southeastward from March 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 1915. He also notes the area, that had it been captured, would have brought the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division directly into the battle as an offensive force. This sketch sets the general area, which is augmented by trench maps that follow.



The first casualty in the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade came quickly as Private Holmes #7153 of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was killed by an enemy shell on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The [War Diary of March 1915 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion](#) reported that the Germans opened high explosive artillery on the Village of Fleurbaix and that a shell burst on the Main Street killing Holmes. The next day, the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade took over command of the section of defence from the British 22<sup>nd</sup> Brigade. Privates Peter Nelson #7060 and Arthur Wherry #18834 of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion were killed in action during the change-over, as were Privates Ross Herman #8101, William MacKay #8480, George Craig #8313 and Ferguson Bremner #8418, all of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Battalions made it through this period without any deaths.

The [War Diary of March 1915 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade](#) reported heavy sniping at night as early as March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Although it was reported to be quiet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade front on



March 5<sup>th</sup>, the enemy was shelling Bois-Grenier and two sniping casualties were reported – 2 killed and 1 wounded in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion as they relieved the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion (Private John Hollingworth; #6806 at Bois Grenier; Private James Corcoran #6201 at Neuve Chapelle). By month's end the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade lost 36 men, including 1 Officer and 2 NCOs.

As the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade moved to take over from the 22<sup>nd</sup> British Brigade, so did the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade move to take over the lines held by the British 21<sup>st</sup> Brigade at Fleurbaix. The [War Diary of March 1915 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade](#) reports active shelling and sniping by the Germans. Private Ralph Munger #16578 was the first casualty of the Brigade when he died of wounds received in the trenches at La Boutillerie, south-east of Fleurbaix on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Private Thomas Monahan #872 of the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion was killed in the trenches the following day, also at Fleurbaix. The 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion avoided any combat deaths during this period.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade, which was poised to become the main combat unit in any forward offensive action, moved from Armentières to the front lines on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The [War Diary of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade](#) reports that the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalions proceeded to the trenches in relief of the British Border Regiment, the Grenadier Guards and the Northumberland Yeomanry.

Communications during this period of “*Baptism of Fire*” fell on the trusting hands of the [1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Divisional Signal Company](#) which arrived at Sailly in the afternoon of March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Maintaining effective communications with the artillery and infantry units would be critical to the success of the mission. It would appear a highlight, was the receipt of a new 12 plug telephone switch board on March 8<sup>th</sup>, which they reported as “*quite an improvement*”. The Canadians put a strong emphasis on the communications aspect of their operations, as the British had already reported significant interruptions in communications from the front lines to the headquarters in the rear due to the shelling of communication lines. It was the loss of communications that ultimately led to the failure of the Battle of Neuve Chapelle and the termination of the movement of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division.

The seriousness of the planned action was highlighted in the address of the Corps Commander on March 3, 1915 when addressing the Canadian Officers (see [14<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diary March 1915](#)):

*“Gentlemen you are about to face a cunning, cruel and unscrupulous enemy. If you make a mistake, you will not get a chance to make a second one.”*

The G.O.C. warning was correct. On March 4<sup>th</sup> the Germans were lightly shelling the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the Canadian trenches with their 77 mm Field Guns. Private Edmund Ropey #22750 was the first of the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion killed by a sniper in the trenches of Rue Petillon on March 4<sup>th</sup>. The next day Private Charles LaPointe #26572 was sniped and killed while going up to the front line at the SAILLY-FROMELLES ROAD. Both men were buried in a local cemetery constructed by the Imperial (British) units. The process of moving in and out of the trenches, most often in relief of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion continued throughout the period, all in preparation for much anticipated attack on Neuve Chappelle scheduled for the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.

The reports of the [Conference of March 5, 1915](#) at Béthune highlight the importance of the planned action at Neuve Chapelle and on to Aubers. It would appear that these comments are those made by General Sir Douglas Haig, as noted by in the references to Haig's war diaries and letters, edited by Sheffield and Bourne <sup>10</sup>:

*The advance to be made is not a minor operation. It must be understood that we are embarking on a serious offensive movement with the object of breaking into the German line, and consequently our advance is to be pushed vigorously. Very likely an operation of considerable magnitude may result.*

*The idea is not to capture a trench here, or a trench there, but to carry the operation right through; in a sense surprise the Germans, carry them right off their legs, lurch forward to AUBERS-HAUTE POMMEREAU ridge with as little delay as possible, and exploit the success thus gained by pushing mounted troops forward forthwith.*

Throughout the period, the German shelling of the Canadian sector continued. Heavy shelling of Bois-Grenier and Fleurbaix resulted in 2 deaths in the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade.

The [2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade War Diary for March 8<sup>th</sup>](#) reported occasional sniping accompanied by German shelling of the area at Fleurbaix. The Canadian artillery responded with "effective shelling of the enemy lines". General Haig, Officer Commanding 1<sup>st</sup> British Army issued his "[Special Order](#)" for the Battle on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1915, a copy of which was found in the War Diary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Canadian Field Artillery:

### **Special Order.**

*To the 1st Army.*

*We are about to engage the enemy under very favourable conditions. Until now in the present campaign, the British Army has, by its pluck and determination, gained victories against an enemy greatly superior both in men and guns. Reinforcements have made us stronger than the enemy in our front. Our guns are now both more numerous than the enemy's are, and also larger than any hitherto used by tiny army in the field. Our Flying Corps has driven the Germans from the air.*

*On the Eastern Front, and to South of us, our Allies have made marked progress and caused enormous losses to the Germans, who are, moreover, harassed by internal troubles and shortage of supplies, so that there is little prospect at present of big reinforcements being sent against us here.*

*In front of us we have only one German Corps, spread out on a front as large as that occupied by the whole of our Army (the First).*

*We are now about to attack with about 48 battalions a locality in that front which is held by some three German battalions. It seems probable, also, that for the first day of the operations the Germans will not have more than four battalions available as reinforcements for the counter attack. Quickness of movement is therefore of first importance to enable us to forestall the enemy and thereby gain success without severe loss.*

*At no time in this war has there been a more favourable moment for us, and I feel confident of success. The extent of that success must depend on the rapidity and determination*



*with which we advance.*

*Although fighting in France, let us remember that we are fighting to preserve the British Empire and to protect our homes against the organized savagery of the German Army. To ensure success, each one of us must play his part, and fight like men for the Honour of Old England.*

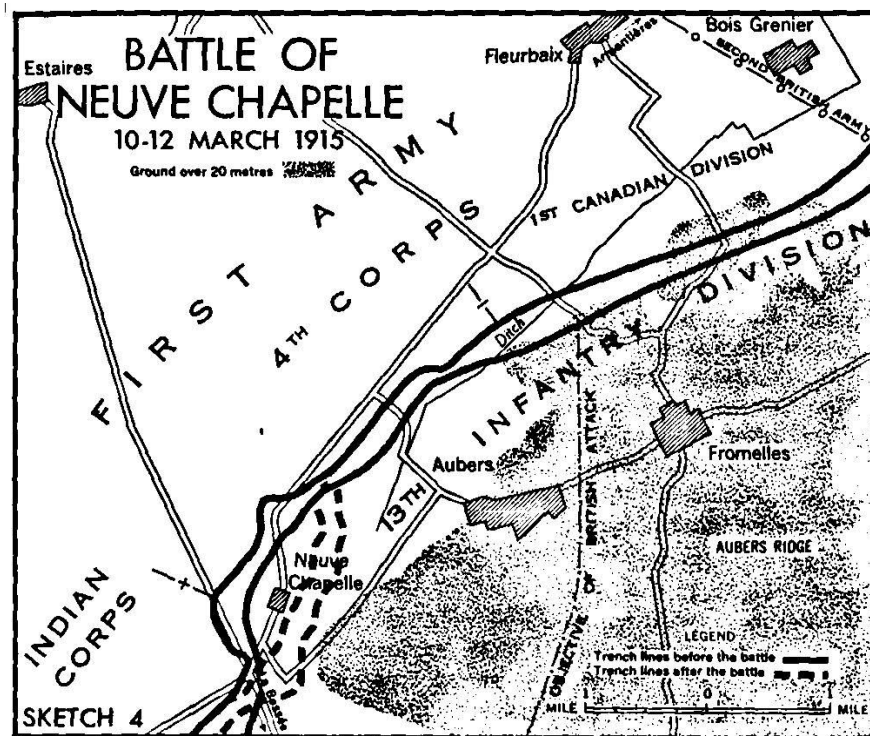
9th March, 1915.

(Sd.) 1), HAIG, General,  
Commanding 1st Army.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade was to take the lead on any offensive actions forward of the trenches, if and when the call came. The front line troops would therefore be from the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalions.

The war diary of the [15<sup>th</sup> Battalion for March 9, 1915](#) shows that the order to take positions in support of an attack at Neuve Chapelle was received at 12 midnight. The 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion was to take up position on Rue de Bois. The diary also states that SECRET ORDERS were given for the attack. They moved into that position at 6 am on the 10<sup>th</sup> followed by the main artillery attack which started at 7:30 am.

The disposition of the Armies at the opening of the Battle of Neuve Chapelle (10-12 March 1915) is depicted in Sketch 4 by Nicholson <sup>6</sup>, which shows the bulge in the British lines at Neuve Chapelle and stagnant lines elsewhere. The Canadian line is south of Fleurbaix, to the southwest of Bois-Grenier:



While the Canadian Infantry was holding the line on the ground on March 10<sup>th</sup> 1915, the Canadian Artillery joined in to deceive the Germans as to the direction of the British

attack. The plan of attack is as described in Operation Order No. 5 by Lt. Gen. Alderson, Officer Commanding the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division (extract from 9<sup>th</sup> March 1915):

*(Author's Note: C.R.A. is "Commander Royal Artillery" and not an error of C.F.A. "Canadian Field Artillery". S.A.A. refers to "Small Arms Ammunition")*

*The 4<sup>th</sup> Corps will attack tomorrow, March 10<sup>th</sup>. The first stage is the capture of NEUVE CHAPELLE. An artillery bombardment will begin at 7:30 am and at 8:30 am the 8<sup>th</sup> Division will assault the enemy's trenches.*

*The Canadian Division will assist in this attack by making a demonstration by fire along its entire front with a view to preventing the enemy from sending reinforcements from the neighbourhood of Fromelles to Aubers. It will moreover, be prepared to take the offensive when ordered by the 1<sup>st</sup> Army.*

*The C.R.A. will make arrangement to open an artillery bombardment at 7:30 am. Fire must be directed on –*

- a) The enemy's fire trenched is order to convince him that he is about to be attacked.*
- b) FROMELLES and the FROMELLES-AUBERS road as far as the railway crossing.*
- c) On LE MAISNIL and LE MAISNIL-FROMELLES road.*
- d) Enemy's known gun positions in order to keep down his fire.*

*The Infantry in the trenches will at 8 am open a heavy fire both from rifles and machine guns. This fire should be continued at intervals throughout the day, with due regard to the necessity for keeping a supply of S.A.A. to repel a counter attack.*

The infantry ground forces from the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division continued harassing fire throughout the day but never left the trenches. The British 1<sup>st</sup> Army captured Neuve Chapelle before noon on March 10, 1915, and thereafter they began their advance on the Aubers ridge. During the afternoon and evening hours of March 10<sup>th</sup> the German Army had both the time and the opportunity to bring up reinforcements. The British were sensing problems as in the war diaries and letters of General Haig <sup>9</sup> the entry for March 10<sup>th</sup> states:

*The infantry attack met with initial success. Carrying four lines of German trenches and capturing the village, but then lost its momentum owing to communication difficulties. Reserve troops were not brought forward quickly enough to exploit the success. The Germans regained their composure, brought up their reserves and re-formed their line, which the British had insufficient ammunition to break.*

The Canadian 1<sup>st</sup> Division (the "reserve troops") activities continued on March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> with the same action order of the 10<sup>th</sup>, that being, to keep the Germans busy and prevent them from moving infantry facing the Canadians to the trenches now overrun by the Indian and British forces. The Indian Corps of the British 1<sup>st</sup> Army led the offensive westward from Neuve Chapelle to Bois de Biez. The Canadian 1<sup>st</sup> Division was put on alert to be prepared to join the offensive action.

The opening of the battle is described in the [War Diary of the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion on March 10<sup>th</sup>](#):

*Battle of Neuve Chapelle began with tremendous bombardment of enemy lines by British about 3 miles to our right, at half past seven in the morning. About 8 o'clock infantry advance began. No sign of British Brigade on our immediate right, but everything was in order for the 14<sup>th</sup> to advance if called upon. Would have been difficult operation unless Germans opposite us were attacked on flank, as wire in front of German trenches had not been shelled, and was uncut.*

The men were “*anxious to be in the fight*” but direct attacks by the Canadians did not occur. Had the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division been called upon to take up an offensive position, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade would have been called upon to attack the enemy with two battalions along the Rue du Bois for an attack on the enemies salient. During this period the infantry of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigades continued their harassing fire on the German trenches, which although reportedly a success, did not stop the enemy from bringing up reserve troops from the rear.

What follows is in part the record of what did happen in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, coupled with details of how the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division was to join the advance to Aubers once the British had effectively broken through and was going forward.

The details of the proposed attack are provided in [Appendix A](#) of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade War Diary for March 1915: *(text and 2 map sketches)*

Appendix A

Operation Order No. 4

by Brig, Gen. R. W. Turner, VC, DSO Commanding 3<sup>rd</sup> CN INF BDE

LILLE SHEET 36

11 Mar 1915

1. *In the event of the Brigade being ordered to act offensively the following will be the arrangements:*

*15<sup>th</sup> Bn will at once move forward placing two companies in the trenches of No. ISS with the 14<sup>th</sup> Bn, 1 coy under cover in RUE PETILLON ready to advance to trench line of No. ISS and 1 coy in fork of No. ISS in rear of trenches*

*13<sup>th</sup> Bn will be held in readiness in Rue de Bois.*

*16<sup>th</sup> Bn will hold position as at present.*

*When orderd, 14<sup>th</sup> Bn will make the assault on the enemy's salient south of their centre and will be supported by fire of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Bn.*

*One days rations in addition to iron ration.*

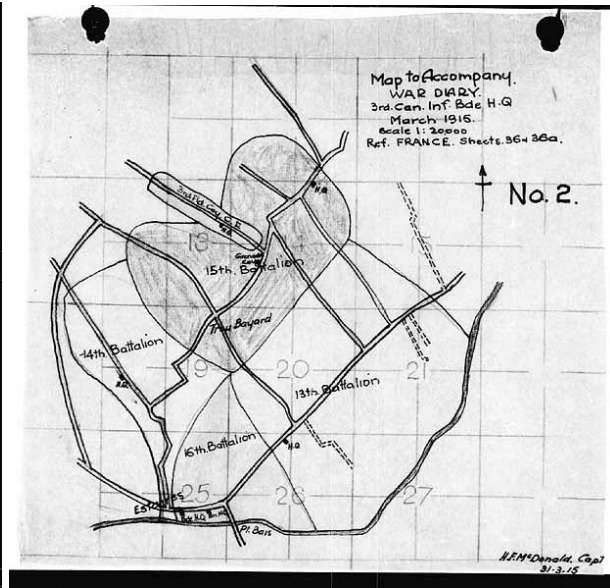
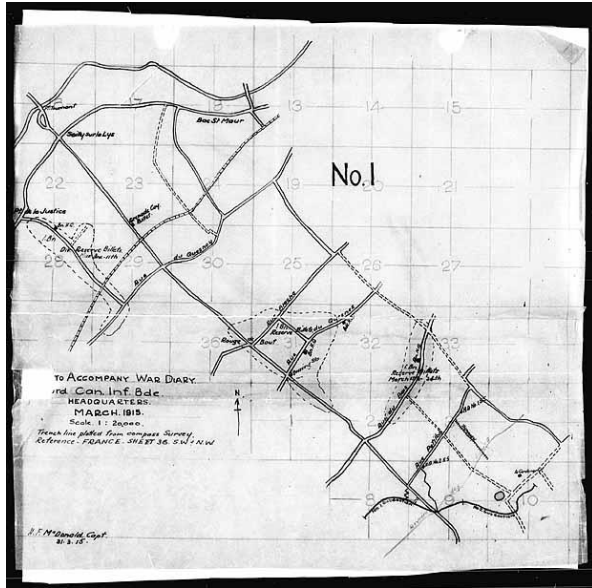
*Bde HQ at No. 1.S.S. RUE PETILLON.*

*Order to move will be issued later.*

*(Sgd) G. B. Hughes, Lt. Col.  
CM 3<sup>rd</sup> CN INF BDE*

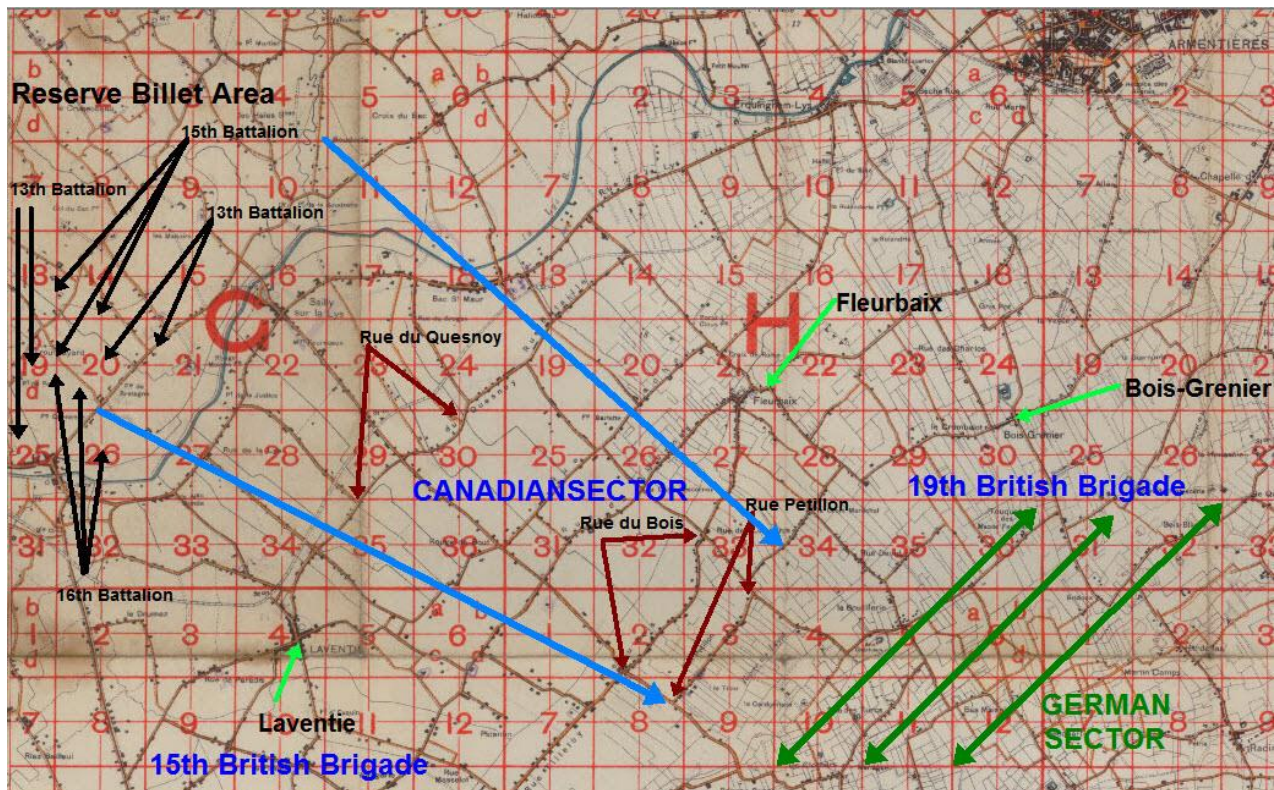


### 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade War Diary Maps



(Authors Note: The area discussed in the order were illustrated by two hand-drawn maps, complete with the correct trench map coordinates illustrated. From that information, I have marked up a trench map for the Laventie to Bois-Grenier area to illustrate the movements. Larger versions of these sketches and map are provided in the attachments to this article.)

### Marked Up Trench Map Using War Diary Information



On March 12<sup>th</sup> the British 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was moving on Aubers, directly opposite the Canadian Front, where several hundred German prisoners were being taken. Once again the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division was called to alert to move in concert with the British advance, if required. It was proposed that an intense artillery barrage would precede the attack by one battalion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade, which would lift and move forward as the infantry attacked. The two reserve battalions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade would move in to fill the void of the attacking battalion. In essence, the plans called for the same form of *creeping barrage* which the Canadians used (as Currie learned from the French at Verdun) to great effect later in the war.

Danger on the battlefield existed for the Canadians and limited patrols were sent out past the defensive trenches (see *previous note about the Canadians never leaving the trenches*). On the night of the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> the [14<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diary](#) reports that Private Arthur Jones #25960 was killed, and another wounded, by enemy machine gun fire while on a patrol into No-Man's Land. Interestingly, the records do not report his death until [March 26, 1915](#) as his body was never found. Sergeant Land and 3 other men went out to look for Private Jones on the night of the 12<sup>th</sup> but never located him and it was thus presumed he was taken "*either dead or alive by enemy patrol which was known to be out also*". Clearly, we need to be careful in accepting dates in the official records as the exact dates of a casualty. Death would stay away from the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion until the night of March 18<sup>th</sup> when once again one man was killed and two wounded by snipers. Another three were killed and seven wounded on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Many more were wounded on the 25<sup>th</sup> just as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade was relieved by the British 24<sup>th</sup> Brigade.

The [15<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diary for March 12<sup>th</sup>](#) states that the British 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade had captured a line of trenches running northward from MOULIN DU PIETRE and that they were pushing toward RUE DENPER. The 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division was instructed to "*hold themselves in readiness to co-operate*", with an expectation they would move forward on the night of the 12<sup>th</sup> or early on the 13<sup>th</sup>. The attack never took place, however the battalion continued to man the trenches and were subject to shelling from the enemy, even as they started to work on the new communication trench.

Estimates of enemy casualties came in on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March suggested 4,000 had been killed, 12,000 wounded and a further 2,000 had been taken prisoner. Canadian casualties were increasing and on March 16<sup>th</sup> Private Stanley #27677 of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion was killed by a bullet in the head. Light patrols were carried out towards the German lines, as noted by Lt. Shoenberger's patrol on the 21<sup>st</sup> to within 25 yards of the German saps. The Germans continued harassing machine gun fire on the Canadian trenches and kept close watch with overhead aeroplanes, but the Canadian's did not move from their trenches. On Friday March 26<sup>th</sup> the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion moved off to new billets at L'EPINETT to take up a defensive position.

The effectiveness of the artillery is noted in the [War Diary, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Canadian Field Artillery](#):



#  
Wed. Mar. 10/15 FLEURBAIX

Opened fire 7-30 am. Observation good. Brigade salvos fired at 5 minute intervals followed by battery salvos in echelon. Infantry officers in trenches reported fire very effective. In no case did our shell endanger our own trenches although 80 yards apart in some places. German battery 800 yds S.E. from left of our line was shelled by our batteries. Enemy's battery ceased fire. Enemy shelled FLEURBAIX with howitzers but no casualties were reported. In evening learned that the Indian Division, 5 miles S.W. of us had captured NEUVE CHAPELLE and portion of ridge along front of this Division up to ARMENTIERES. Casualties 1,700.

By the early evening of March 12<sup>th</sup> the British were planning changes, moving the 2 left Canadian Brigades in behind the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade on the right, so as to assist in the breakthrough. By late evening on the 12<sup>th</sup> the British 1<sup>st</sup> Army curtailed any further advances for the 13<sup>th</sup> and instead formed a defensive line. On March 13<sup>th</sup> Sir John French telegraphed Lord Kitchener that:

*Cessation of the forward movement is necessitated to-day by the fatigue of the troops, and above all, by the want of ammunition. The First Army is consolidating and strengthening its new line. Further plans are being matured for a vigorous offensive.*

There was no subsequent advance and on March 15<sup>th</sup> French once again telegraphed Kitchener and reported:

*The supply of gun ammunition, especially the 18-pounder and 4.5 inch howitzer, has fallen short of what I was led to expect and I was therefore compelled to abandon further offensive operations until sufficient reserves are accumulated.*

Keegan<sup>8</sup> presents perhaps the clearest explanation of the failure of the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, which resulted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division not having the opportunity to advance. Early on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 1915 the battle was going well for the British, as the German wire had been cut, the trenches destroyed and the enemy forces were only one-seventh of the British and Indian. With no opposition, the attacking forces breached 1,600 yards in twenty minutes. It was then that things fell apart. The second phase meant moving forward after a 15 minute pause to allow the artillery to shell the ruins of Neuve Chapelle, so as to disable any remaining defenders. Alas, there were no defenders, the Germans were fleeing to the rear and the British had to await approval to move forward in pursuit, a request that was refused by Brigade Headquarters. The delay (the "communications problem") provided the time the Germans needed to hastily bring up their reserves, as planned prior to the British attack. Keegan notes that the British were lucky that the German artillery ammunition was so depleted that it could not shell the 9,000 plus British troops stalled on the front awaiting approval to move forward. Communications were so poor that it took over 6 hours for the approval to move forward and another 3 hours to initiate the move. It was too late, the German reserves had been moved forward and more were on the way. March 11<sup>th</sup>

became a day of stalemate and March 12<sup>th</sup> the day of the German counterattack. Fortunately, the German attack faltered for the same reason the British faltered – poor communications, inability to move troops quickly enough, and strong forces on each side of the line. It was all over on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March and more or less a draw. The rest of the month both sides were relegated to defending their positions.

In the end, all British action faltered prior to the Canadians joining the advance. There ended the likelihood of the first Canadian offensive action in France in March of 1915. On March 16<sup>th</sup> all three brigades of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division commenced movement out of their billets, which was complete by noon of March 17<sup>th</sup>. Only the Canadian Artillery remained in an offensive position.

The Canadian infantry units returned to their defensive positions south of Fleurbaix. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigades CEF marched out of the area on March 25<sup>th</sup> to an area north of Lys. The process is described in Operation Order No. 6:

SECRET

Copy No. 4

OPERATION ORDER No. 6

by

Lieut-General E.A.H. Alderson, C.B., Commanding 1st Canadian Division.

14th March, 1915.

1. In accordance with the 1<sup>st</sup> Army Orders the 6<sup>th</sup> Division will take over the line at present held by the Canadian Division.

2. On the night of the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> the 16<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division will take over Sections 4, 5 and 6 of this line under arrangements to be made between the 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Brigades. Officers of the 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade will be sent to reconnoitre the trenches in these sections on the night of the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup>.

The two battalions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Brigade in Divisional and Brigade Reserve and the battalion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Brigade in Brigade Reserve will move from their billets at noon on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

3. On the night of the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> the 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division will take over Sections 1, 2 and 3 under arrangements to be made by the 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Brigades. Representatives of the 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade will reconnoitre the trenches on the night of the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>.

The reserve battalions (Brigade and Divisional) of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Brigade and the battalion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Brigade in Divisional Reserve will move from their billets at noon on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

4. For the purpose of this move, the RUE DE LA LYS (H.7.d.) -FLEURBAIX road and all roads East of it are allotted to the 6<sup>th</sup> Division. Roads west of the above road are at the disposal of the Canadian Division.

5. The Field Companies C.E. and Field Ambulances will move at the same time as the Divisional Reserve battalions of their affiliated Brigades.

6. The Canadian Artillery will remain in position until further orders.

7. Further orders regarding destination of Canadian Division will be issued later.

Issued at 12 noon

Signature  
for Colonel, General Staff.

In his despatch of April 5<sup>th</sup> 1915, Sir John French reported on the action of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division in the British Battle of Neuve Chapelle:

*During the Battle of Neuve Chapelle they (troops of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division) held a part of the line allotted to the First Army, and although they were not actually engaged in the main attack, they rendered valuable help by keeping the enemy actively employed in the front of their trenches.*

*All the soldiers of Canada serving in the Army under my command have so far splendidly upheld the traditions of the Empire, and will, I feel sure prove to be a great source of additional strength to the forces of this country.*

Duguid <sup>5</sup> reports that the Canadian 1<sup>st</sup> Division held its line for 24 days in March 1915 with 278 casualties:

- Officers: 1 killed, 10 wounded
- Other Ranks: 67 killed, 200 wounded

We have compared the historical information on March 1915 Canadian battle casualties from 100 years ago to what are now reported by the [Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#) in their database.

For clarity, the CWGC records only deaths, not wounded, and include Newfoundland in their data for Canadian Casualties, although prior to 1949 they were British casualties, as they are here in March of 1915. The records denote where the death occurred, thus some wounded in one country die in hospital in another country. For example, a PPCLI soldier may have been wounded near Ypres, Belgium and then progressed through a Field Ambulance, Casualty Clearing Station and then to a Main Hospital on the coast (i.e. Etaples, France) where he then may have died.

The database of the CWGC for March of 1915 shows the following:

### Breakdown of Canadian Deaths:

Category	Casualties	Adjusted
Recorded KIA Belgium (1 in 13 <sup>th</sup> Bn.; 32 for PPCLI.) <sup>(see note)</sup>	33	32
Recorded KIA France <sup>(see table below)</sup>	91	92
Death Occurred in the United Kingdom	14	
Death Occurred in Canada	38	
Newfoundland deaths recorded as Canadian	13	
DOW in hospital France from action in Belgium	10	
<b>TOTAL CASUALTIES</b>	<b>199</b>	

*(Author's Note: Private John Montanelli #24267 13<sup>th</sup> Bn. was KIA south of Fleurbaix, France (east of Bois-Grenier) but listed on the Menin Gate Memorial, so he should be recorded as KIA France. He has been added to the table below for combat deaths in France. The information has been posted to the [CEFSG 12777](#).*

## Combat Deaths in France:

Unit	Officers	NCO's	Other Ranks	Total Casualties
Canadian Engineers			2	2
Canadian Field Artillery			1	1
Canadian Garrison Artillery			1	1
1 <sup>st</sup> Battalion, 1 <sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade	1	1	15	17
2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 1 <sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade		1	9	10
3 <sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1 <sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade			7	7
4 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, 1 <sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade			2	2
5 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade			3	3
7 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade	1		4	5
8 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade		1	4	5
10 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade			3	3
13 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade		2	11	13
14 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade		1	8	9
15 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade		1	2	3
16 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade		1	10	11
<b>Total Combat Deaths</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>92</b>

If we sort the deaths in the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division by date we find that 36 (*including Private Montanelli*) were killed prior to the start of action on March 10, 1915; 15 during the period of March 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> and 41 additional deaths to March 31, 1915. It would appear from the numbers that Duguid<sup>5</sup> accounted for deaths due to battle to be from March 7<sup>th</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. A complete list of the March 1915 casualties, sorted by unit, is provided in APPENDIX 1.

The two officers noted as killed in France in March 1915 were Major P. G. Rigby (7<sup>th</sup> Bn.) and Lieutenant W. N. Galaugher (1<sup>st</sup> Bn.). The reference to an officer KIA by Aitken would be Major Rigby, as he was killed on March 10<sup>th</sup> and Lieutenant Galaugher was killed on March 26<sup>th</sup>. The Circumstance of Death files report the following details:

- **Major Percy Rigby:** Killed in action in the trenches near Fleurbaix on March 10, 1915. Body initially buried at Chateau at La Boutillerie and later exhumed and buried in Rue David Military Cemetery at Fleurbaix, 3 ½ miles south of Armentieres, France. Final burial reference given as Plot 2 Row D Grave 49.
- **Lieutenant William Nelson Galaugher:** Killed in action in the trenches at Bois-Grenier on March 20, 1915. Buried at "Y Farm Military Cemetery" ¾ miles south of Bois-Grenier, 3 miles south of Armentieres, France. Trench Map coordinates are Sheet 36.H.35.d.9.2.

Interestingly, one of the research projects that resulted in the investigation into the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Divisions action at Bois-Grenier was the CWGC report on the UNKNOWN OFFICER of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Battalion that was exhumed from the area of Bois-Grenier (Trench Coordinates 36.I.31.c.6.7) in 1934. Those remains are now buried in Canadian Cemetery No. 2 at Neuville-St. Vaast, 6 miles north of Arras. This large officer, with considerable dental work, has yet to be identified and remains a mystery for many (see CEFSG [Forum Post 12722](#) for additional details).

Although the Battle of Neuve Chapelle was primarily a British Battle, with considerable input from Indian Forces, the significance of the Canadians manning the line cannot be underestimated. Truly it was the first great assault by artillery in the Great War, and without doubt, the real “*Baptism of Fire*” for the Canadian Expeditionary Force. When the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division moved to the Ypres Sector, only 20 miles to the north, they carried with them the experience that they gained at Bois-Grenier.

Please take a moment to read through the list of Canadians in Appendix 1 who paid the ultimate sacrifice at Bois-Grenier in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle.

#### Appendices:

1. Canadian Casualties of March 1915. Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records.

#### Textual References:

1. Cana, F. R. 1923. Source Records of the Great War: Neuve Chapelle – The First Great Artillery Assault (*British Publicist*). Austin & Horne Editors, Volume III, National Alumni U.S.A.
2. Canadian Expeditionary Force Study Group. [Chronology of the War Matrix Utility](#).
3. Aitken, M. (Sir). 1916. The Official History of the Canadian Expeditionary Force – Volume 1: Canada in Flanders (11<sup>th</sup> Edition). Hodder & Stoughton, Toronto Canada.
4. De Souza, C. (Count). 1923. Source Records of the Great War: Neuve Chapelle – The First Great Artillery Assault (*French Military Authority*). Austin & Horne Editors, Volume III, National Alumni U.S.A.
5. Duguid, A. F. (Col.). 1938. [Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919](#) (General Series Volume 1: August 1914 – September 1915). Minister of National Defence, Ottawa Canada.
6. Nicholson, G. W. L. (Col.). 1962. [Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War: Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919](#). Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, Ottawa, Canada.
7. Keegan, J. 1998. [The First World War](#). Vintage Canada – Random House Canada Limited, Toronto Canada.
8. Cook, T. 2007. [At the Sharp End – Canadians Fighting the Great War, 1914-1916, Volume 1](#). Penguin Group, Toronto, Ontario Canada.



9. Granatstein, J. L. 2014. [The Greatest Victory - Canada's Hundred Days](#). Oxford University Press, Don Mills Canada.
10. Sheffield, G. and Bourne, J.(ed). 2005. [Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters 1914-1918](#). The Orion Publishing Group Ltd., London, England.

War Diaries Cited for March 1916: (Source: [Library and Archives Canada](#))

All war diaries of the units in action in March 1915 were checked, where available. Only those from which a direct reference was taken are noted below:

- [1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery](#)
- [1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Divisional Signal Company](#)
- [1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division
- [2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division
- [3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division
- [1<sup>st</sup> Battalion](#), 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division
- [14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion](#), 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division
- [15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion](#), 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division

*(Author's Note: The war diary archives at Library and Archives Canada suggest there are a number of Appendices for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade in March of 1915, but these are not available on-line).*

## Notes:

1. A copy of all the “*Laughton Articles & Essays*” are now available of the Laughton web site at: <http://laughton.ca/index.php/publications/ww1/>
2. For a web based (hyperlinked) version of this particular article, please go to <http://laughton.ca/publications/ww1/pub8.pdf> . That version provides links to the maps, war diaries and other Internet Resources that are used in the article.
3. Additional information, such as larger scale maps and war diary extracts, that was compiled for the Laughton publications are stored on the MediaFire site at this location: <http://tinyurl.com/laughton-publications>. There you will also find PDF and E-Pub versions of all articles for download or on-line viewing.
4. Flip-view copies of the Laughton publications are published in electronic PDF format on the ISSUU self-publishing web site:

All articles: <http://issuu.com/cefmatrix/docs>

This publication: [http://issuu.com/cefmatrix/docs/the\\_cef\\_at\\_bois-grenier\\_march\\_1915](http://issuu.com/cefmatrix/docs/the_cef_at_bois-grenier_march_1915)

5. An archive of the publication is held by Archive.org at:  
<https://archive.org/details/TheCefatBois-grenier-march1915-theForgottenBattle>
6. This article was first published electronically in May 2015.
7. Information contained herein may be used by others to enhance the understanding of the roll Canada played in the Great War of 1914-1921 and to ensure that the men and women who served will be remembered for eternity. The use of this publication for commercial gain is strictly prohibited without the author's written permission.  
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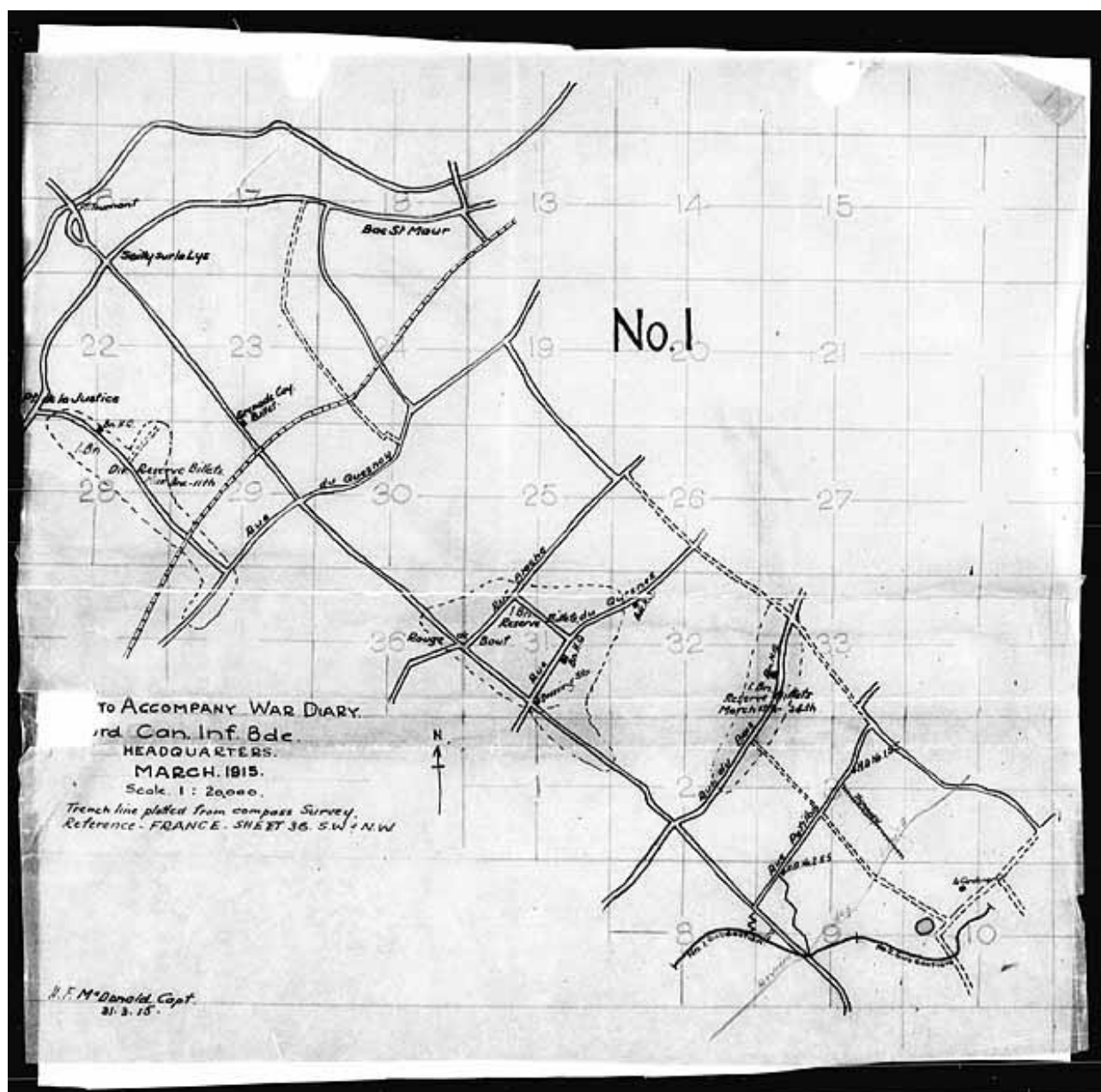
Richard Laughton is the grandson of two Great War Soldiers, each of whom served in the CEF and BEF. They are responsible for his interest in Great War Research. A scientist-engineer by trade, Richard now dedicates most of his research time to the Great War Matrix Project and by helping other researchers “Keep the Flame Alive”.

## APPENDIX 1: Canadian Casualties March 1915

Surname	Initials	Death	Rank	Unit	Number
ADAMS	A W H	22/03/1915	Spr.	3rd Field Coy. C.E.	'45041'
SHAW	W	24/03/1915	Spr.	3rd Field Coy. C.E.	'45204'
PADDON	H A	2/3/1915	Bmb.	2nd Bde. C.F.A.	'41116'
DUGGAN	A R	1/3/1915	Sergeant	1st Heavy Bty. C.G.A.	'23337'
ADSHEAD	H P	9/3/1915	Private	10th Bn.	'20008'
BURROW	T	21/03/1915	Private	10th Bn.	'20447'
SCHMIDT	J	17/03/1915	Private	10th Bn.	'19928'
KNIGHTS	A T	7/3/1915	L/Corporal	13th Bn.	'24500'
McCONACHIE	J A	7/3/1915	L/Corporal	13th Bn.	'24158'
LAWSON	W	16/03/1915	Piper	13th Bn.	'24012'
AULD	A	21/03/1915	Private	13th Bn.	'24691'
FOWLER	J W	7/3/1915	Private	13th Bn.	'24253'
HALLIFAX	R	15/03/1915	Private	13th Bn.	'24948'
KEALEY	C I	15/03/1915	Private	13th Bn.	'24610'
McDONALD	K N	14/03/1915	Private	13th Bn.	'24329'
REEKIE	J G	5/3/1915	Private	13th Bn.	'24408'
TOWNSEND	G E	7/3/1915	Private	13th Bn.	'46900'
TWAMLEY	J B	7/3/1915	Private	13th Bn.	'24887'
WILLIS	W I	16/03/1915	Private	13th Bn.	'24191'
MONTANELLI	J	7/3/1915	Private	13 <sup>th</sup> Bn.	'24267'
MOLT	C M	10/3/1915	Private	14th Bn.	'26663'
HOPEY	E E	4/3/1915	Private	14th Bn.	'22750'
HUNT	C E	10/3/1915	Private	14th Bn.	'25728'
JONES	A S	26/03/1915	Private	14th Bn.	'25960'
LAPOINTE	C	5/3/1915	Private	14th Bn.	'26572'
MARTIN	J	27/03/1915	Private	14th Bn.	'26478'
RATTIGAN	J P	18/03/1915	Private	14th Bn.	'25997'
SOADY	G P	26/03/1915	Private	14th Bn.	'25891'
MOORE	T	10/3/1915	Sergeant	14th Bn.	'25791'
THOMPSON	J W	28/03/1915	Corporal	15th Bn.	'27547'
GOVING	J	19/03/1915	Private	15th Bn.	'46488'
STANLEY	G E	19/03/1915	Private	15th Bn.	'27677'
PATTERSON	D	14/03/1915	L/Corporal	16th Bn.	'29293'
BURNS	R	14/03/1915	Private	16th Bn.	'29080'
CREAM	C B C	14/03/1915	Private	16th Bn.	'28855'
HULL	W	19/03/1915	Private	16th Bn.	'29220'
HUNTER	A	14/03/1915	Private	16th Bn.	'29102'
HUNTER	G M	27/03/1915	Private	16th Bn.	'29335'
INNES	J	7/3/1915	Private	16th Bn.	'29108'
McDONELL	D J	7/3/1915	Private	16th Bn.	'29128'
RITCHIE	S	14/03/1915	Private	16th Bn.	'29487'
RUSSELL	J	18/03/1915	Private	16th Bn.	'29492'
TURNBULL	J T	19/03/1915	Private	16th Bn.	'29508'
PLASKETT	I C	10/3/1915	Corporal	1st Bn.	'6162'
GALAUGHER	W N	26/03/1915	Lieutenant	1st Bn.	

SKINNER	A M	2/3/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'6407'
CAMPBELL	R H	14/03/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'6547'
EDWARDS	W H	13/03/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'6635'
BRIDGE	H P	4/3/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'6777'
CORCORAN	J T	5/3/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'6201'
FAIRBAIRN	J G	18/03/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'18042'
HOLLINGWORTH	J	5/3/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'6806'
HOLMES	C	1/3/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'7153'
JACKSON	J M	12/3/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'6570'
LLOYD	W	10/3/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'6473'
LOWE	G H	10/3/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'6356'
NELSON	P	2/3/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'7060'
PRESTON	S	30/03/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'7188'
SMITH	C	4/3/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'6383'
WHERRY	A R	2/3/1915	Private	1st Bn.	'18834'
MacMILLAN	D	31/03/1915	Corporal	2nd Bn.	'8002'
NEWMAN	T	10/3/1915	Corporal	2nd Bn.	'8291'
BREMNER	F	2/3/1915	Private	2nd Bn.	'8418'
BRISBOIS	J	2/3/1915	Private	2nd Bn.	'8663'
CRAIG	G	2/3/1915	Private	2nd Bn.	'8313'
DENIKE	A C	19/03/1915	Private	2nd Bn.	'8539'
EARLS	G	10/3/1915	Private	2nd Bn.	'8542'
HERMAN	R R	2/3/1915	Private	2nd Bn.	'8101'
MacKAY	W A C	2/3/1915	Private	2nd Bn.	'8480'
WATSON	R	23/03/1915	Private	2nd Bn.	'7806'
BOWMAN	L W	6/3/1915	Private	3rd Bn.	'9764'
COMRIE	J	6/3/1915	Private	3rd Bn.	'18028'
CROFT	J W	6/3/1915	Private	3rd Bn.	'9426'
GILMORE	R	22/03/1915	Private	3rd Bn.	'10123'
MARRIOTT	J A	15/03/1915	Private	3rd Bn.	'9223'
SHEA	G W	6/3/1915	Private	3rd Bn.	'9743'
THEOBALD	J	17/03/1915	Private	3rd Bn.	'9834'
KING	G E	31/03/1915	Private	4th Bn.	'11046'
PATTERSON	G S	8/3/1915	Private	4th Bn.	'11014'
BEAMES	T H	12/3/1915	Private	5th Bn.	'13325'
EBY	A R	21/03/1915	Private	5th Bn.	'13627'
PROVAN	H	13/03/1915	Private	5th Bn.	'13031'
RIGBY	P G	10/3/1915	Major	7th Bn.	
BEVAN	G F	16/03/1915	Private	7th Bn.	'16861'
MUNGER	R C	4/3/1915	Private	7th Bn.	'16578'
McCOMB	S R	8/3/1915	Private	7th Bn.	'17145'
OBERG	A E R	10/3/1915	Private	7th Bn.	'17267'
BARUGH	W	10/3/1915	Private	8th Bn.	'28'
FORD	C E	20/03/1915	Private	8th Bn.	'842'
MONAHAN	T	3/3/1915	Private	8th Bn.	'872'
NAYLOR	H V	9/3/1915	Private	8th Bn.	'84'
WHITE	W	14/03/1915	Sergeant	8th Bn.	'1089'

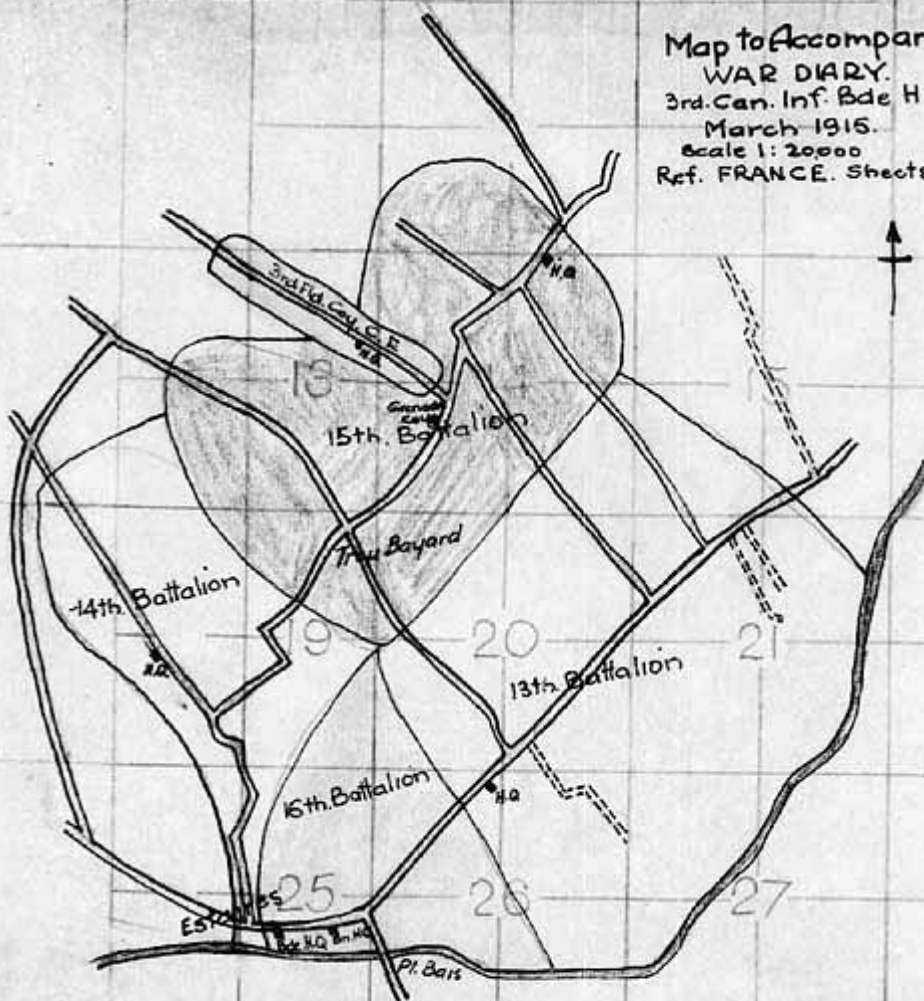
## LARGER SCALE MAPS





Map to Accompany.  
 WAR DIARY.  
 3rd. Can. Inf. Bde H.Q.  
 March 1915.  
 Scale 1: 20000  
 Ref. FRANCE. Sheets. 36+ 36a.

↑ No. 2.



H.E.M. Donald, Capt  
 31-3-15



